

**Summary Report**  
**Vermont Commission on National and Community Service**  
**November 12 – 13, 2009**  
**Stowe, VT**  
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Thanks to the diligent work of a committed Board and Staff, the Vermont Commission's retreat met its identified outcomes. It continues to be a privilege and pleasure to work with such esteemed professionals in the field of service and volunteerism. The following are the highlights of the meeting with 'original documentation' from charts and recommended next steps:

**Outcomes**

1. Commissioners will understand their roles and responsibilities
2. Commissioners and Staff will strengthen their 'team' efforts
3. Commissioners will leave with a 2009 – 2010 calendar of events and activities
4. Commissioners will begin to understand the impact of the Serve America Act

**WHERE WE HAVE BEEN!**

**STRENGTHS**

- Talented, dedicated and creative staff
- Variety of commissioner backgrounds
- Commissioners are dedicated and committed
- We get the job done!
- Commissioners participate in VT CNCS events
- Executive Director's commitment, skills, leadership and enthusiasm
- Openness – ability to work together
- Full commission
- Enthusiasm of interacting with programs

- Small connected state
- Culture of volunteerism and service in Vermont
- Terminology
- Senior Corps and other streams of service
- Humor
- Long term commitment of Program Directors – continuity of service

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

- AmeriCorps member discounts and ‘cool’ freebies – snowboarding passes as idea, music cards
- Homes for service – Home Share Vermont
- Offer fundraising and resource development training to grantees
- Look at possibility of rotating Commission meeting through State to visit different AmeriCorps sites to increase Commissioner awareness and involvement
- Continue to engage businesses with Commission (VT Businesses for Social Responsibility)

First Awareness

Working toward financial support to programs

- ‘Adopt a Program’ – Liaison – attend program events, be an advocate and ambassador to one program
- Tapping into technology – lots of young AmeriCorps members
- Affiliation with Department of Human Services
- Tri-State connections – ME, NH, VT
- Long term national service staff and program staff

## **CHALLENGES**

- Assisting AmeriCorps Volunteers – Making VT an Opportunity

- Focusing on matching additional funds available
- New Governor – Re-appoint Secretary/Departs, Re-appoint Commissioners, need policies and procedures in place
- Potentially new programs to manage – two planning grants
- 5 programs competing against each other
- Engage new commissioners
- Recruit new commissioners – 1 – Youth and 1 or 2 others
- Collaborate and Integrate National Programs and Senior Corps

## **WHERE WE WANT TO GO!**

**Determine what commission structure works? What needs to change?**

**Identify ad hoc groups to move 3 priorities forward?**

**Create systems and processes to ensure success?**

**Continually ask: How will we know success?**

**Program Directors meet with Commissioners to discuss:**

1. Housing
2. Resource Development

## **System/Structure**

Connection with Program Directors

Meet collectively with Program Directors

Foster 'team' approach among Program Directors

Survey Members – via survey monkey- and Google docs

## **HOW WE GET THERE!**

### **Possibilities for Action!**

- Member blog/AmeriCorps discounts
- AmeriCorps visibility and housing support

- Connect with Medium-sized businesses for ‘win-win’, for example, banks
- Create an ‘entertainment book’ called the ‘volunteer book’
- Careful not to compete with our programs for resources
- In Vermont, 10% unemployment: campaign to sign people up for service (AmeriCorps and VISTA)
- Site Visit – connect/begin with Service project
- Families of military – (choose a liaison) – needs will be great – Michelle Obama’s priority – military families – continue to ask for visit from Michelle Obama or from her staff
- Members with housing issues may be connected to military families
- Be served and serve – give opportunities for those we serve to serve (empowering)
- Serve members an ‘appreciation’ dinner
- Service Project by Commissioners and staff
- Warmth as Love – weatherization projects
- Supporting members to serve others
- Piggyback with other ‘national days of service’ events; namely, MLK Day, etc

## **THE ROLE OF THE VERMONT COMMISSIONER**

### **VISIONARY Role of Vermont Commissioner**

- Determine the strategic direction
- Participate in Governor’s Service Awards
- Develop strategic partnerships with businesses, foundations and politicians
- Be Ambassadors of service – build ethic of service in state
- Ensure Sustainability

### **ADMINISTRATIVE Role of Vermont Commissioners**

- Monitor Budgets
- Grant Review

- Ranking Grants
- Funding Decisions
- Training Budgets for members

### **SUPPORTIVE Role of Vermont Commissioners**

- Attend program events and launch
- Promote programs
- Provide trainings on specific topic based upon your expertise

### **What are the CNCS priorities?**

1. Veterans
2. Education
3. Environment
4. Healthy Futures
5. Opportunities for age 55 and older 'Encore' programs

### **POWER OF THREE: TOP THREE PRIORITY AREAS FOR VTCNCS**

#### **1. Support Program Members and Volunteers**

- Homes for service information and discount/coupon offers
- Commissioner and Program Relationship: Commissioners at Program Directors' meetings and Adopt-a-Program
- Electronic communication to facilitate member communication; such as, a member blog

#### **2. Resource Development**

- Strategic partnerships with businesses and foundations

- Increase resources and leverage resources
- Reach out to VBSR
- Develop list of 'what' precisely the needs are; do a needs assessment
- Present what the VTCNCS is about to VBSR
- Conduct training on needs assessment
- Talk to other commissions about creating a 501c3 arm for the Commission to raise funds

### **3. Marketing/Outreach/Public Relations**

- Strategic partnerships with businesses and politicians
- Expanded public presence
- Public exposure – Public Service Announcements
- Program Sustainability
  - Members exit into workforce
  - Passing the torch – to new
  - How to increase members and number of planning grants
  - Business staffing
  - Identifying area of need
- VT B & I Expo – capitalizing on exposure

### **CALENDAR 2009 - 2010**

November 2009

- 2011 – 2012 Grant Application Due
- Commissioners Read and Score Applicants
- Commission Meeting/Annual Retreat
- November 17 Program Directors' Meeting

- November 17 (Program needs assessment regarding resource gaps) (Matt)
- November 16 (outreach to VBSR)

#### December 2009

- Grant Review Meeting
- Tri-State Conference
- December 15 Program Directors' Meeting
- December 15, 2009 (Resource Development Training – Matt)
- VT CNCS Need Assessment Regarding: Resource needs (Liz and Gretchen) Research 501c3 Arm
- Homes for Service information and discount system information from ME and NH via Susan

#### January 2010

- January 18 MLK – Day of Service
- January 20 – Program Director Meeting: John and Leslie, Commissioner and PD Discussion
- VT CNCS Presentation to VT Businesses for Social Responsibility ( Matt, Emily, Liz and Gretchen)

#### February 2010

- February 17 (PM) – Commission Meeting – Waterbury
- February 17 (AM) – Program Director Meeting

#### March 2010

- March 17 – Program Directors' Meeting
- Late spring, electronic communication for members exchange of opportunities – finished by mid-summer – (Emily and Wendy)

#### April 2010

- Governor's Service Awards (Leslie, Annie, Marie, Guy)
- April 16 – Legislative Day (Leslie, William)
- April 21 (PM) – Commissioner meeting Location: Waterbury
- April 21 (AM) – Program Directors' Meeting

#### May 2010

- National Service Conference
- May 8 – 15 AmeriCorps Week
- May 27 and 28 – Business Expo – Annie, Lead, with Marie, John, Guy, Alice, Jean Luc
- May 19 – Program Directors' Meeting

#### June 2010

- June 16 (PM) Commission Meeting – Program Location: TBD
- June 16 (AM) Program Directors' meeting
- June 23 – 26 National Service and Volunteerism Conference in New York City

#### July 2010

- EOE Programs
- July 21 Program Directors' Meeting

#### August 2010

- August 18 (PM) Commission Meeting at Program location: TBD
- August 18 (AM) Program Directors' Meeting
- EOE Programs

#### September 2010



- September 11 – National Day of Remembrance
- CNCS National Grantee Meeting and Commissioner Institute
- September 15 Program Directors' Meeting

#### October 2010

- AmeriCorps Launch (John)
- 2011 – 2012 NOFO Released
- Public Meeting – Applicants who Intend to Apply
- POS Programs
- October 20 – Program Directors' Meeting

#### **RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS:**

1. As requested, attached is a 'white paper' that Project TASC produced in regard to developing a 501c3 arm to the commission in order to raise funds.
2. SERVE FLORIDA is highly successful in using the 501c3 arm to develop resources. Wendy Spencer is the Executive Director and is quite willing to share her successes and challenges in creating the 501c3 arm to the commission.
3. Focus on the Three Top Priorities and the Calendar for specific assignments and for producing positive and meaningful growth for the VTCNCS.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions and/or concerns. My best wishes for your continued success!